

Memories of Swanwick  
by Dick Tabing  
[transcribed from notes by David Sprehe]

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ICRR

The Whippoorwill

Double headers with two colossus  
freight

all flatcars

Grandpa Alvi Hubler his put put (push pull)

a section foreman

His two younger sons Andrew and Clifford

In the small building south side

between the street crossings

the building housed the

rts trailer and the ? man powered cart (car)

the Swanwick mail sack had its

pole and arm at one side of the

building. with the arms up and

the bag clipped between and waited for  
the mail car with its hook out  
would the hook ripped the  
sack and swung in the car (mail)  
coal trains lime cars corn cars  
flat cars with military tanks, half  
tracks artillery, jeeps trucks cars  
many tarp covered objects  
then i saw my first diesel.

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i didn't know anything about  
Swanwick until I had to go  
to school in the third grade  
a nice two room school with a  
full basement. At Lost Prairie all  
grades were in the only room  
at that time there were two RR  
tracks and a siding. A third  
track to park lime cars and load  
RR ties and other things going

back way.

On the east side of the tracks and south stood the remains of a grain elevator. On east 1/2 mile +- was the pit that was the remains of the Swanwick coal mine.

On the west & south was the building that housed the push pull engine and trailer to repair the tracks. also a pipe and arm the mail sack was attached for the next mail train to snatch.

turning left north of the tracks stood a tall building that had a wagon scales, one office and my barber shop, Waldo Quigley ran.

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On the North side of that street was a large house where

the Foster [?] family lived. Next  
was the Pentecostal Church and  
the Swanwick Grange Hall  
The Illinois Central Railroad  
was well regarded by me a  
my grandpa Alvie Hubler was  
a section foreman, Coulterville to  
almost Pinckneyville  
I would be at my grand's next  
door and his RR phone would  
"ring" It was not a ring  
but a knock, knock, knock, pause  
and more knocks until answered  
I liked the trains. When I  
could not sleep the midnight freight, eastbound, would put  
me to sleep (many, many times)  
When I decided to join  
the US Navy I was hoping  
to become a Diesel Mechanic  
but that didn't happen.  
Swanwick memories must include  
the train call the Wiperwil (?sp) ---> Whippoorwill

the engineer's name was  
Roethe (?sp) and had a brother

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a farmer who lived 1/2+ mile  
north of the tracks with a farm  
crossing just south. we in town  
could the whistle 3 times as he  
flew by.

During WWII there was always  
military trains hauling tanks,  
two wheeled guns, half tracks  
trucks and jeeps plus tarp covered  
objects us young boys could  
wonder about

the big church was a Presbyterian  
and I'm sure more people  
there carried the name Robb!  
and that's my middle name.

Aceneth (sp) Robb was the  
postmaster, always there always

friendly. Our box #22 was too high for a third grader, but she always chuckled and came around and opened the box and handed our mail.

there were three grocery stores during my ten years there actually four, that's later.

Placement on the main north/south road was South of Rt I 13 was Bud and David [?] Long's Tavern

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first across the highway was Frassato Corner with milk bread lunch meats soda ice cream assorted goodies, gas in front and a car repair shop in back. Also the hi school bus (and Gray Hound) stop. Five to 12 kids

waited warm and dry.

Next was Cunningham

whitch delt in dry goods

school supplies, candy and

maybe firecrackers

Walter Cunningham owned the

store across the street north

and had a good grocery supply

In the summer a space

between the store and the RR tracks

would have chains and a sheet

stretched for Swanwick's own

movie night. We couldn't

wait for darkness! and always

a slow freight would whistle then

both crossings.

there were several business

I think I mention the Frossato

Ice house necessary for our

ice box.

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Mr Moody Quigley was  
a traveling salesman who  
carried all kind of patined drugs  
and the large trunk of his  
new NASH was loaded with guns, every gauge, caliber,  
action and age. He was our  
next door neighbor and friend  
and the major reason Im  
a gun nut.

My uncle Warren Halty [Haltz?], after  
serving in the US Navy, started a  
paint shop, car & truck then  
moved to Coulterville and opened  
a top quality Body Shop.

Mr Kenneth Bumman had several  
trucks and a school bus line.

He and his wife were the parents  
of two girls and two boys.

Richard the younger was my  
best friend and Best Man at our  
wedding. In the "little" room



grades 1-4 were three Richards.

Rich Lee Frassato, Rich Dale Bumman,  
and me R. Robb Tabing.

Our Blacksmith shop was just  
north of the east RR crossing

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The Beatly family lived next  
north from the "smithy's" shop  
and he was an electrician and  
known as a good one.

Leroy Busch and his brother  
lived with their mother, more good  
people, and Leroy was one of our  
truck drivers.

Now the largest employer  
was Less Jackson and his wife  
Lena and the sawmill.

The Jackson boys that I know  
were Jimmy and Raymond good  
kids though Jimmy had a scar

across his nose when his pony  
ran under a closeline, but  
JAMES SAID it was from drinking  
"shine" from a quart jar.  
I think the sawmill mostly  
cut railroad ties, I'm not sure.  
Swanwick should have been  
noted for it's pretty and smart girls  
there were many  
But I had to find my Redhead  
about ten miles south, 67  
years ago

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Swanwick veterans should  
be remembered though I only know  
the few I was closer too

CORKY FISHER USN

WARREN HOLTS USN

EUGENE BUMANN USN DESTROYER ATOM BOMB  
TESTED EXPLOSION

BOB FRASSATO 20+ YRS ONCE 11

DICK TABING MMI DESTROYER USN

RICHARD FRASSATO 20+ Y 52 PILOT 06

ANDREW HUBLER WWII ARMY

CLIFORD HUBLER WWII ARMY PATTON'S ARMY

RICHARD BUMMAN ARMY DRAFTSMAN

PLUS MANY MORE I DON'T REMEMBER

MY GRANDMA MARGRET ENERST ROBB

HER GRANDFATHER FOUGHT AGAINST

NAPOLEON AND RECIEVED A PENSION

more flashback

after WWII a couple older than my

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folks set up a two pole army tent on

a vacant lot south of our garage.

The elder gentleman worked

at the sawmill and had access to all the rough lumber. So he built a floor like 18" above the ground and installed two wood stoves, a cooking and a heating stove. They were a nice quiet couple and both smoked corn cob pipes. They stayed over a year. I don't recall who owned the land but the tent was abandoned. Someone got the idea to play cards in it. My stepdad strung power from our garage for one light, a big one.

Things started fast and Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon and evening all makes of big fancy cars were parked on both sides of the road.

Many Southern Illinois names floated around of Laweses[?], gamblers, respectable and not so, men's cars were recognized.

I had seen Diesel engines  
on the Missouri Pacific in Sparta and

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was glad to see my first  
streamliner go through our town  
I missed a lot of summer  
activities during the summer  
as I have always called the  
George Robb farm, 3 miles south of  
town my home. I spent weekends  
and all summer there

South of Bud Long's "Corner Saloon"  
was a tent where two older men  
stayed some. Well one died as  
the other cooked breakfast. After  
the other's remains were removed  
the one still there supposedly  
said "Ole Joe won't need his eggs

so I'll finish them."

On several trips to Avie  
Woodside's store I would see  
a steel wheeled wagon pulled by  
a cow (or ox) and a mule driven  
by a man older than my stepdad  
and a lady with dress and bonnet,  
older sister I was told Avie said  
they always just enough cash  
and pennies for their trade.

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Another story passed down  
from the blacksmith shop told  
of a steel railroad wheel. the  
wheel always stayed in a certain  
place as it weighed 300+ pounds.  
Well in the summer many coal  
mines did not work (no sales)  
and this man from deep in Europe

walked through town often. this man  
was known for his strength.  
as he walked by he was hailed  
to come in. as he sat down  
someone asked if he felt strong.  
He didn't reply, so the ringleader  
bet he could not carry the  
wheel 10 steps. The reply was  
how much. Bets came as high  
as a quarter. The man just shook  
his head. One loafer pulled  
out a small whiske bottle full.  
and he offered one good drink.  
The little European man walked  
to the wheel, squatted and picked  
it up and carried to the middle  
of the entrance. Laughs, back  
slaps ect as the little man sat  
down. After a good while the  
owner ask for the wheel to be returned

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the little weightlifter shook  
his head. why not they said.  
The weightlifter pointed to  
the man's whiskey pocket.  
After grumbling it was agreed.  
The little man walked over  
pulled out the bottle and stuffed  
it in his pocket, picked up  
the wheel and replaced it in  
the very original place and  
walked away. All the loafers  
were still who was the  
winner of the exchange.

My thoughts of Swanwick  
can't finish without some  
thoughts of "The" Picnic  
The cemetery is the main  
recipient these things  
I am sure. A Presbyterian  
Church stood close to the



flag pole. It was damaged  
by fire and some of the lumber  
was used to build the house  
I last lived in. In the attic  
many pieces are blackened by fire.

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to a boy rides were  
most important

Ferris wheel

LITTLE CARS

PONIE RIDES

REAL AIRPLANE RIDES

USED THE FIELD ACROSS R13

THEN HOT WEATHER

STORMS

RAINY

VERY COOL

A FARM TRACTOR DISPLAY

MUSIC FROM A RADIO STATION  
IN ST LOUIS  
ALWAYS LOCAL MUSIC

THE GOOD FOOD METER IS ALWAYS  
CHECKING THE PATATOE SALAD

HAVENT ATTENDED LAST TWO  
THE ONE ALWAYS WAS THE  
PENNY PITCH.